



Issue #4, March 1998  
Happy Women's Day!

Internal Newsletter of UNDP's  
Partnership for Progress in Mongolia

## NGOs Play Large Role in Poverty Alleviation

"The evaluation seminar of 14 NGOs in 7 aimags and 7 NGOs in Ulaanbaatar at the end of January was a great opportunity for these NGOs to enjoy their success and learn lessons from each other," Mrs. Christine Musisi, gender specialist, replied. This was the first time when this many NGOs became involved in poverty alleviation activities at their local level. UNDP's Women's Development Fund allocated US\$ 100,000 for funding poverty alleviation activities facilitated by these NGOs. At the seminar, NGOs expressed that their involvement in poverty alleviation activities was beneficial to all sides.

Giving credit to the poor and expecting that they utilize the funds successfully is not realistic. They definitely need support in capacity building, access to information, to market and raise their confidence in utilizing the funds efficiently. In this sense, involvement of NGOs and community-based volunteers is important. Participants of such projects increase knowledge and skills. Not only do these projects provide a source of income, but they also enable people to send their children to schools, pay for their health insurance and taxes and build sense of confidence in the community. There were cases when beneficiaries became members of NGOs and volunteers.

There are 172 projects facilitated or implemented by NGOs. The NGOs benefit as well as the participants. Their capacity improves, they get more experience in poverty alleviation, gain more advising role. With the active role of NGOs in poverty alleviation, the trust of the community and the government in the NGOs rises.

At the seminar the NGOs not only enjoyed their success, but also identified their needs and problems they face. In the future, if the NGOs operate together, their impact would be stronger.

The seminar proved that the involvement of the civil society is very important in alleviating poverty in Mongolia. Community-based NGOs are the ones who are closer to the community and can find common language with the poor, leading them in the right direction. There is a need to increase involvement of NGOs in these activities.



Microcredit helps to combat poverty

## Small projects awarded

UNDP-funded Environmental Public Awareness project received an award of US\$2,000 from TACIS programme for the best small projects. EPAP started its implementation in October 1996 and is to finish this year. At present there are 74 small projects facilitated by NGOs with US\$ 1,500 – US\$ 3,000. The award will be given to those projects, which are implemented successfully and likely to carry on.

## Microbusiness development

UNDP's US\$1 mln is to kick off the microfinance experience in Mongolia for the first time. The project, signed in June 1997, is underway with the executing agency ACDI/VOCA, a US microfinance consulting firm. Workplan design mission of the international technical service provider completed drafting the implementation strategy. The strategy is to be finalized upon comments by the Government and UNDP. By May 1998 project activities will start. The Government of Mongolia is very keen in seeing the results of the project as it addresses microbusiness development and savings in the transition period.

## UN System working together with Mongolia on historic youth agreement

By David Sadoway, OIKOS Consultant

"For the first time ever the UN in Mongolia is being asked to coordinate and focus its youth activities in three areas: employment, education and health"

The Government of Mongolia has declared 1998 "The Year of Youth" and has backed up its words with a 150 million Tugrugs (184 thousand USD) commitment and a concrete Youth Action Strategy plus activities. To

take advantage of the recent Government and NGO consensus on the importance of youth-related issues, the United Nations will sign a first ever agreement on youth with Mongolia's Government. This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is being crafted and drafted during an intense, month-long process of UN agency, ministerial, NGO and youth consultation. The final MOU document will be ready

for signing by both parties, Government and United Nations, in the first week of April this year.

Surveys show that young Mongolians have many worries. These range from poverty, finding a good job and education, to alcoholism and family violence. More recent concerns include HIV and AIDS issues, the price of schooling and pollution issues. Many creative solutions have been developed by youth themselves,

the Government, NGO community and the United Nations. But coordination and information sharing has been difficult and there has been little incentive for organizations to cooperate.

The desire to produce an MOU sprouts from urgent needs to save time, money and effort, to make youth programmes more efficient and effective. "We sometimes walk

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During group discussions at Youth-21 forum

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## News in a flash

**W**omen Scientists in North-East Asia are to get support of US\$500,000 from UNDP for the period of two years. The "Gender Equality through Science and Technology Regional Cooperation in North-East Asia" project is the first gender and development project to build upon the cooperation of governments, institutions and scientists in Mongolia, South Korea and China. While improving women's participation in eradication of poverty, improvement of health and access to science and technology, it focuses also on promotion of women scientists for gender equality in the access of skills, resources, opportunities and decision-making. The project will start its implementation in March of this year.

**N**orth Korea joins the sub-regional project on HIV/AIDS. UNDP has initiated a sub-regional "Support to the Development of an Effective Prevention Strategy for HIV in the Countries in North-East Asia", project beneficiaries of which were Mongolia, South Korea and China. According to the latest news North Korea also expressed its interest to join the project. The first project development sub-regional meeting took place in October 1997. The US\$ 494,000 UNDP-funded project, the focal point of which is Mongolia, is to start in March 1998.

Activities of the project will centre around three thematic areas of focus: enhancing government support for more extensive and comprehensive multi-sectoral responses, supporting groups of people most vulnerable to the immediate impact of HIV infection and enhancing general community awareness.

**P**re-school education is to benefit from a 3-year project of US\$ 1.5 mil. The project has been signed recently and starts its implementation with the UNESCO mission to Mongolia to launch the project. Cost-shared by the Government of Netherlands and Save the Children Fund, the project is aimed to help the pre-school education institutions and poor households. Channeled through the Poverty Alleviation Programme Office, the fund is to cover costs related to kindergarten repairs, establishment of ger kindergartens and community kindergartens and training of community education volunteers and toy production.

## Mongolia catching up in the computer craze

It has not been long since computers and Internet network were introduced to Mongolia. Computer technology is developing so fast that every day we hear of more complicated versions and have to work hard to catch up with the rest of the world. Both UNDP and the Government of Mongolia are making much efforts to do so.

By the Decree of the Prime Minister of Mongolia, a working group for the preparation of the proposal for the Government policy on Satellite communication and Internet, led by the Foreign policy advisor to the Prime Minister Mr. Badral, was established on 20 November 1997. The working group is to conduct a nation-wide survey on current situation on computer supply and Internet services, formulate policy outlines for

Internet, identify social and economic impacts of the Internet and study the use of information by different social groups.

For the first time the UNDP country office in Mongolia was able to connect to the Global UNDP Staff Forum held at the end of February 1998 between the UN Headquarters and country offices. Eventhough there is 12 hour difference between New York and Ulaanbaatar, the Internet allowed the office to watch the Global Staff Forum live online. The fourth Global Staff Forum connected via two-way video, two-way audio and Internet video was truly country-office oriented. It discussed national staff career policies. Starting on 19 February at 10:00 am New York time (11:00 pm Ulaanbaatar time) it allowed the country offices to share the ideas with the HQs on different issues concerning human resource management, programme delivery, information technology, etc until 1:00 pm (2:00 am). Using the Direct PC application with the assistance of Internet Service Provider (Datacom Co. Ltd) we had one of the fastest downloading speed of 450 kb in the world.

The national summit on Information, Communication and Technology will be held in May this year. For the preparation purposes and formulation of the information strategy 5 members of the working group are heading to Kuala-Lumpur to take part in the regional seminar on Information Technology for Sustainable Development on 23-25 March 1998. The objective of the seminar, organized by the UNDP's Asia Pacific Development Information Programme (APDIP), is to provide the participants with an introduction to the benefits of Information Technology for support of a wide range of development activities.

## Mongolia is not in lack of food

By A. Delgerma, reporter

According to the FAO (Food and Agricultural Organization) report of in October 1997, Mongolia is in a very hard situation of 90,000 tonnes of shortfall in cereal supply and 23,000 tonnes should take the form of emergency food aid and one fourth of the Mongolian children is under chronic malnutrition by the study of the World Vision.

But Mr. Ajmal M

Qureshi, the FAO representative to China and Mongolia is very optimistic. On hisa-week visit to Mongolia in February he consulted with the government of Mongolia the 1998-2000 activity of FAO. "If you look at the economic results achieved in 1997, they are very impressive. Mongolia is able to in-

crease its grain production and it has controlled inflation, reducing it to 17 percent, which is a great achievement. As well, Mongolia's GDP has grown considerably. Government policy in the agricultural sector is very pragmatic and impressive and fits very well in FAO special programme on food security."

FAO is assisting on GDP projects on germ-plasma, food security and technical economic accounting under the technical cooperation programme on food security. The two sub-regional projects involve sharing experience of other countries in agricultural and forestry projects.

"The state of food and agriculture of Mongolia is very strong. Mongolians are very hard working. Scientific and human resource expertise is very impressive. FAO is attentive to all proposals of the government and is supporting Green revolution very much. Within the projects' framework FAO will help the government in meeting its objectives."



The FAO representative to Mongolia, Mr. Qureshi presented his credentials to the President of Mongolia in February this year.

Mongolia has been the member-country of FAO since 1974. At present time, 3 FAO-funded are being implemented with the UNDP's administrative and technical support. "By having a representative, our country would benefit more in the field of agriculture and food. At least 5 projects each year will be implemented," said Mr. Batkhuyag, Programme Assistant of UNDP. "The Mongolian Government presented about 10 pipeline project proposals to Mr. Qureshi."

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## Rehabilitating the gobi

by Ch. Chuluuntsetseg, MAP-21 Programme Manager

Under the MAP-21 programme a small project called "Rehabilitation" has been implemented in Umnugobi aimag since July 1997.

The project aims to rehabilitate and protect the gene pool of herbs and fodder crops, annual and perennial plants and water sources. As well the reproduction of vegetable seed, studying the possibilities of improving productivity of soil through fertilizing and disseminating methods of planting vegetable in gobi area are also the objectives of the project.

Under this project, in 1997, about 5,000 trees of 1-5 meters long were planted. The seedlings of elm, aspen and almond were prepared and supplied the aimag centre and other soums with about 200 seedlings. Also, the project has grown annual and perennial animal fodder and distributed 10 tonnes of grass to about 10 herders in Bulgan and Khankhongor soums for fodder. 11 tonnes of potato and vegetable was grown and supplied for consumption of the locals.

Besides building a locally-adaptable seed reserve of cucumber, tomato, cabbage, turnip, onion, water-melon and sun-flower, the project also trained 170 persons interested in growing vegetables.

The family of Baraadz is very keen on expanding the activity further. In 1998 the family is looking forward to planting bush and trees in at least 10 passes in Govigurvansaikhan mountain and supply seeds on order. The project will also set up a vegetable preservation shop and publish guidelines and brochures on how to grow vegetable in gobi area.

(cont. from page 1)

down the same road having the same destination in mind. It is best to work together if we are going in the same direction," explains Ya. Tumurbaatar, Director of the Department of Youth, Women and Family Affairs in the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, a key ministry for youth issues in Mongolia.

The point of the MOU writing exercise is not to just create words on paper, but rather it seeks to obtain a commitment and understanding on youth-related issues in Mongolia.

Cooperation also makes for more creative and effective youth activities and projects. For the first time ever the United Nations in Mongolia is being involved to co-ordinate and focus its own youth programming and finances in three key areas: employment, education and health. In turn the Mongolian Government will undertake the same exercise within key ministries.

Building on tangible successes of the past, the Memorandum of Understanding on Youth hopes to provide a framework for meeting young Mongolians' needs today and into the next millennium.

For more information:

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2. OIKOS Consultants, David Sadoway, telephone 00-976-1-450034, fax 00-976-1-326221, email [d\\_sadoway@hotmail.com](mailto:d_sadoway@hotmail.com).

## Up close and personal

Exclusive interview with the Personnel Assistant Mr. B. Lhasuren

**How long have you been with the UN?**

For 4 years now.

**What do you like and dislike about working here?**

What I like most is that the organization functions upfront on the global arena. I was, as all of us were, thrilled and proud of the Secretary General's decisive actions against critical situation in Iraq. I think this was a significant step forward in the overall operation of the organization. I dislike this never-ending hecticism.

**Are you a hard-working person? What kind of the person are you?**

I'm a persistent guy, who is trying to cope with my portfolio on time and to have his job under the control. People say I'm hard-working, but I don't think I am.

**What do you like doing in your leisure time?**

Working in the UN barely anyone has time for a hobby. If I have time I like reading detective stories. My favourite writer is John Grisham. I liked him after reading his "Firm".

**What specifically you like in his stories?**

They are the kind of books that you can not put away until you finish it. It really holds you with those intrigues, dealings with FBI and mafia structures and the ways and manoeuvres these intrigues are revealed.

**What are your future plans in your professional life?**

For the person like me in this position, chances for developing myself, beyond certain extent, and career are limited. What I foresee accomplishing in the nearer future is studying for a degree to enable myself to work in more substantive and creative field. My slogan is "to do more, to see more and to be more..."

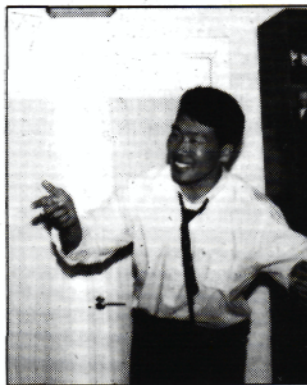
**Many people are interested in working with the UN. As a**

**Personnel assistant, could you share with our readers your thoughts on the qualities (both professional and personal) people should have in order to be chosen to work in the UN?**

The major thing is, of course, strong educational background. Then, the person displaying energetic, dynamic qualities, I would say has better chances. Having initiative and being able to find solutions to problems independently are also in-count.

**Do you have anything else to share with our readers?**

I think, from the Operations side, in order to provide speedy and efficient services to our customers like donors, our government counterparts, we should be a bit more flexible with our rules and regulations and less dependent from the Headquarters.



## News in a flash

**UNDP's Disaster Preparedness** project will benefit from the American Military Civil Affairs Battalion. The Battalion made a mission to Mongolia in February with the objective of reviewing and updating disaster preparedness planning survey on Mongolia, which was carried out in March 1997, and identifying proper NGOs in Mongolia in the field of humanitarian assistance. UNDP will be channeling requests of the NGOs to the Battalion through the Embassy of the USA.

**Mongolia, China and Republic of Korea** combine their efforts on combating poverty in the sub-region. For the purpose, UNDP is allocating US\$ 400,000 for the sub-regional project, where Mongolia is a focal point. The project is at the stage of developing the project document. The first workshop on the project will take place in spring this year.

**In mid-March the Reproductive health** "Fee for Services Clinic" opened its doors to Mongolian patients. Initiated by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, UNFPA and Marie Stopes International, the clinic will be providing all sorts of services and treatments related to reproductive health such as pre- and post-natal treatments, STDs, etc. The objective of the clinic is to develop a model clinic, which will yield lessons for the private and public sector in terms of quality-of-care, efficiency and impact that a small-scale clinic can have. All costs related to the clinic are to be covered by the Dutch government for the period of 5 years.

**The UNDP Reference Unit is moving** and getting a new name - the United Nations Information Shop. Soon to be located in the former Polish Embassy building steps away from the UNDP office, its doors will open to the public soon. The development collection will be expanded and the Shop will offer more magazines for readers. It will also distribute to users all UN publications produced for Mongolia and provide a free-of-charge Internet café.



**Where the Steppe Meets the Internet**

Sustainable Development in Mongolia

United Nations homepage: [www.un.org/mongolia](http://www.un.org/mongolia)  
E-mail: [dsaw@undp.org.mn](mailto:dsaw@undp.org.mn)



## Upcoming events

1. Workshop on the "Gender and poverty" under the Capacity Building for Poverty Alleviation. The issues to be put forward are present gender situation in Mongolia, especially at the grassroots level and define further direction of activities on gender and poverty alleviation. A study tour in the gobi aimags will be conducted to evaluate the situation at the local level and define the goals.
2. Since April small projects under the UNDP's HIV/AIDS project start implementation. Total amount of funding for these projects are US\$20,000. The small projects to be facilitated by NGOs will be directed to preventive and protective activities.

## Coffee and economy continued ...

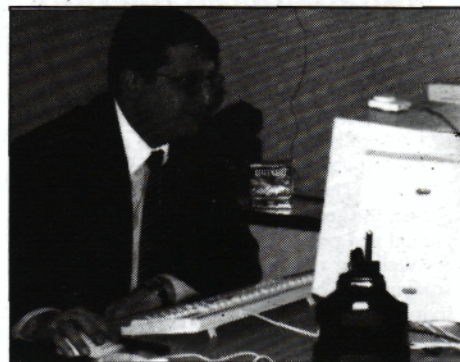
UNDP's Think Tank project brought together around 40 government officials, parliamentarians, private sector representatives and academicians for the debate on economic issues. The first debate which took place in the beginning of February in Chinggis Khan hotel discussed key issues of economic development and analyzed the recommendations drawn by Harvard Institute experts on the economic development of Mongolia. The presentations were made by Mr. Da.

## UNV becomes an honorary member of the MFDJA

The Press Institute of Mongolia for its 2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary has awarded journalists for their journalistic excellence. Among the winners Mr. Mustapha Eric, UNV, was noted for his significant contribution to the development of foreign relations of the PIM and received an award of honorary membership of the Mongolian Free Democratic Journalists Association.

Since the PIM was established the achievements and contributions it made to strengthening democracy in the country are great. Established with the project of DANIDA it provides a real and neutral support to journalists of Mongolia.

Since 1996 UNDP has supported the PIM through projects worth upwards of US\$ 2 mln. UNDP support the establishment of 6 regional training centres for journalists, with Internet links and e-mail and support training courses on basic journalism skills.



Ganbold, Chairman of the Standing Committee on Economic Policy and Mr. R. Amarjargal, MP.

The "Economic Club" is named not only to welcome the top economists, but everyone who is interested in contributing to the further development of the country," noted Finance Minister Tsagaan in his speech opening the club. The Club would play an important role in directing and guiding the development of the country, helping to form a united vision for Mongolian business. As well it will help to provide the Government of Mongolia with professional support in formulating na-

tional economic policy.

"Economic and social development are the two sides of the coin, they can not be parted from each other," said Mr. Gardner, Resident Representative of UNDP, wishing a great success for further debate in the club for the well-being of Mongolia.

The Club will meet fortnightly and in May a national summit will be organized. The second session of the Club is scheduled in March with Minister Tsagaan's presentation on the Role of the State in market economy and social development.



## Strawbale buildings – the wave of the future

Energy-efficiency stands as one of the top-priority issues in Mongolia as the country is in the high rates of green house gas per person in the world. According to statistics, every person in Mongolia breathes 90 kg of GHG each year.

UNDP's Provision of Energy Efficient Social Services project is to help to reduce this figure. The strawbale house is one of the activities of the project. Strawbale houses save 90% of the coal used by ordinary constructions. More and more government and private organizations have become interested in the construction of such buildings. At present, requests for 120 strawbale buildings came to the project.

Concerning the increasing request from different organizations in mid-February this year, the second workshop on building strawbale constructions was held at the Ministry of Nature and the Environment. 101 people from 9 aimags and the city companies participated. At the workshop participants were interested to cooperate with the project, eager to learn the strawbale building technology and teach others about this technique.

The building captures the interests of both the Government and international donors to invest into such buildings. Tuv aimag Governor Mr. Batbold is allocating Tg 83 mln for the building of about 20 strawbale buildings. The Government of Canada is donating more than US\$ 30,000 for the purpose. On this occasion, the Canadian Ambassador Mr. Balloch and UNDP Resident Representative Mr. Douglas Gardner signed an agreement on 10 February 1998 in the strawbale health clinic in biocombinat. The fund is to be utilized to build a strawbale kindergarten in the Chingeltei district of Ulaanbaatar and a strawbale health clinic in Bayanhangai.

## Arrivals/Departures:

UN dispensary doctor Patricia and her husband Leo Zelkowitz, UNV at the TB centre left the country after a year assignment. Mr. Aung Kyaw Myint, UNV from Myanmar is arriving to replace the UN dispensary doctor; Mr. Choi Kwang-Koo, Korean UNV joined the UNV office as the programme officer; Mr. Kikutani, Japanese UNV finished his assignment as a coordinator for rural business promotion.

**We accept letters! All letters should be no more than 200 words in length. News briefs should be a maximum of 100 words each. Field reports should not exceed 350 words.**

The Blue Sky Bulletin is a publication of the United Nations Development Programme in Mongolia. The newsletter is published every month. The next deadline for submissions is the 18<sup>th</sup> of every month. All submissions must be sent to B. Zoltuya, Information assistant, c/o Elbegzaya, UNDP, 7 Erkhueu street,

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